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CREE TRICKSTER TALES

by Rev. E. AHENAKEW<sup>1</sup>.

CHICHIPISCHEKWAN (ROLLING HEAD).

It happened in the darkness of the primeval world that there existed a being, it is said, who may have been a man. With him was one who was his wife. They had two sons, one being half-grown and the other a small, toddling boy.

They lived in a wigwam, not of hides, but made of many willow wands plastered over with mud to make it warm. Once in a while in later times such lodges were built for winter use; but the impossibility of their being removed from place to place brought them to such discredit among this nomadic people that they were in time entirely replaced by those of skins.

This family lived happily for a time. Every morning the father went out into the woods and seldom came home without bringing with him the choicest pieces of venison. He was happy in his work and in the companionship of his wife and children.

A time came, however, when he noticed that she had changed somehow. Instead of the happy, contented look he used to see on her face, there was now an air of restless preoccupation. A strange light was in her eyes. Every now and again she would get up and go for wood in a nearby bush. This she did repeatedly, even when it seemed altogether unnecessary. The man said nothing, but made up his mind to do some investigation in order to help her, if it were possible.

One day, some time after this, being in the bush, he saw her coming. Something in her eager gait so roused his curiosity that he hid himself behind some willows. She approached a dead tree, at the foot of which there was a large hole. She tapped! A great number of snakes came crawling out. She sat on a log that had blown down; and they crawled all around her, while she fondled them.

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<sup>1</sup> The author gratefully acknowledges the help of his two friends, the Rev. Canon E. K. Matheson of Battleford, and Chief Thunderchild.

He was horrified! In him was born all that human abhorrence of the snake. Not stopping to make his presence known, he went back to the tent and called his two sons. "I am going out to hunt," said he. "Tell your mother so when she returns."

He walked a long time and passed many wild animals before he killed a moose. Without even stopping to take out the insides, he went home. Arriving there, he sighed as if in great weariness and told his wife that he had killed a moose. He explained to her where the carcass lay and asked her to go for some of the meat, as he himself was not feeling well. She showed marked reluctance at having to go; but she could not very well disobey him. "Let me run for some wood first," she cried. "No," replied the man in a firm voice. "Go at once!"

Mumbling to herself, she started off. The man, looking at the fire, saw a piece of sinew contracting with the heat. He knew that she had dropped it there while he was not looking and that it was an act of magic performed by her, in order to make shorter the distance she had to go. He scooped it out of the fire with a piece of stick and wetting it, stretched it to its utmost length, thereby counteracting the effect of her act.

Having done this, he armed himself with a hunting knife and walked to where he had seen the snakes. He tapped and as before the snakes began to crawl out one after the other. As fast as they came out, he cut off their heads. He spared only one — and that a very little one. "When the Earth is peopled by men," said he, "you will not have the power to interfere with those who are to be lords of it. You will be small and easily conquered." Having made this pronouncement on the reptiles of the West, he hurried back to the tent and began to make preparations for his wife's return.

He took four things and calling his older son to him he said, "You are to take your little brother on your back and flee for your lives. Here are things which will be useful when danger approaches; this Awl means a hedge of thorns; this Flint gives fire; this Piece of Rock can form a mountain; and this Beaver-Tooth, a great river of water. Farewell, my own sons! Farewell! May your lot be such that good may come to the Earth through this evil that is fallen upon us. In days to come should you want to see me, look up to the Northern skies; for I shall be up there. People will call me Oochaykatak (The GreatDipper)."

The boy took up his brother and fled to the West.

Some little time intervened before the mother arrived, panting and covered with perspiration. Her path had been long and she had run most of the way. Without a word she dropped her load and hurried to the bush. A great suspicion had come over her. Sure enough, there lay her pets in a heap, dead. Only one little snake came out to tell her what had taken place. An insane fury came over her; and she ran to wreak vengeance upon her husband for the death of the reptiles.

In the meantime, the man had been making preparations; he had pulled

a net over the door; and he stood, axe in hand, ready for his wife. She approached furiously; but her progress was arrested by her being caught in the net; only her head went through. The man severed it from the rest of her body, and then fled upward through the opening on the top of the wigwam. "Chase him up to the sky," said the Head to the Trunk, "and I will go after his sons." The Body soared after the fleeing man up to the heavens; while the Head sped westward after the boys.

The man may be seen up in the northern skies at night time. He is the Great Dipper; to one side is the Little Dipper, which is the body of his former wife, always chasing him but afraid to go too near the abode of the North Star, who loves her husband and therefore is ready to protect him.

#### THE FLIGHT OF WESAKAYCHAK.

With wonderful speed the head of the mother rolled after the two boys. This was now Chichipischekwan, the Rolling Head. From afar the boys could hear her say, "Where — where can you flee? I am going to kill you!" Wesakachak, for that we must now call the boy, ran faster, holding his little brother. Ever nearer came the voice of his mother. Something must be done. He remembered the advice of his father; and, putting his brother down on the ground, he threw the Awl behind him, saying at the same time, "Let it be as my father said." Immediately, there came to be a seemingly impenetrable hedge of thorns between them and their pursuer. Once more he took up his brother and fled.

Rolling Head could not find an opening anywhere. She went up and down, but the hedge extended from sea to sea; there was no alternative but to force her way through somehow; and this she proceeded to do. Here and there she rolled, screaming with pain and fright as the thorns pricked her. How long she took to make her way through is not told; but in time she was free on the other side, bleeding all over but more furious than she had been before.

It is said that this hedge of thorns disappeared as time went on but that remains of it are still to be seen in the cactus plant in the South.

In the meantime the boy had been making his way as best he could, although he was now very tired, having had to carry his little brother on his back for so long a time and having no sleep. Once again he heard the approach of his mother as she spoke the words, "A-a-a-ay-y! Where in the world can you flee to?" He laid down his brother and throwing the piece of rook behind him, said, "Let there be a mountain from one end of the earth to the other." Immediately, Rocky Mountains sprang up and once again Rolling Head found herself thwarted.

Back and forth she rolled, looking for an opening through which she could go; but she found none. Imbued with unnatural power though she was, a time came when she was exhausted. She lay down beside a wall of rock and slept. A strange sound awoke her. It seemingly came from

the heart of the mountain. The sound grew louder and louder till she saw a hole forming. It was a monster worm which had gnawed its way through the rock. Today this is known as the Golden Valley trail between Banff and Mt. Assiniboine.

Here was her chance! As soon as the worm was through, she followed crushing it, she then rolled into the hole, which was just large enough to let her through. Bleeding and scratched beyond recognition, she emerged on the other side, her fury increased a hundredfold. Once again she gave chase to her children and was close up to them in a short time.

The boy had been making very slow progress, in fact he was beginning to see the futility of mere flight. When he knew his mother's head to be near again, he threw down the Flint behind him and said, "Let there be a wall of fire from one end of the land to the other!" This happened. Once again Rolling Head found herself confronted by a seemingly insurmountable obstacle. She sought for a safe way through; there was none. Only one way was possible and that was to go through. Hesitating only for a short time, she rolled in to the flames and emerged on the other side, burnt and blackened. A man were dangerous in such a plight; but no creature exists that can exceed the fierceness of a woman, thwarted in her vengeance and humiliated at the same time. She gave chase once more!

After throwing the Flint, the boy Wesakaychak was just able to stagger along, because, of his great fatigue. He was hardly able to keep himself from falling asleep, even as he walked along unsteadily. When he heard his mother's voice again he took this time the beaver's tooth; and, throwing it ahead of him, said, "Let a mighty river flow here!" It was only when he found himself confronted by a great flow of water that he realized his fatal mistake. The river was in front of them and the Rolling Head behind. He and his little brother were now at the mercy of their mother; and he knew what that meant. His faculties cleared; and he ran along the side of the river, seeking some way of escape. The river seemed uncrossable. When about to despair, he saw two old patriarchs. They were great Bitterns, old men in appearance, sitting, one on either bank of the river, exactly opposite to each other. These birds are quite large now; but in those days they were monsters in size. He ran to them and implored them to put him and his brother across the river. This they refused to do. They were not bad at heart, however; for in time they took pity on the plight of these boys. They put their necks side by side; and on this hastily improvised bridge the fugitives crossed safely to the other side.

In a moment or two Rolling Head came up. "Put me across!" she commanded. The birds refused. Now Rolling Head was a creature well versed in the wisdom of her kind. She made many flattering remarks to the Bitterns. Seeing that they were pleased, she kept on till they offered to help her. Wesakaychak implored them not to do so, but to no avail.

The birds once more placed their necks side by side and Rolling Head proceeded to cross.

Her naturally wicked nature was her own undoing. Recent wet weather had given rheumatism to the birds and their necks were painful. Rolling Head, when she saw Wesakaychak on the bank, began to jump up and down as she crossed. The incensed birds pulled up their necks; and she tumbled into the river. The boy, Wesakaychak, acting on the instinct which was later to bring him into such prominence in the affairs of the young world, took a stone and, throwing it into the water where his mother's head had disappeared, yelled out the word, "Namao! Namao!" (Sturgeon). The Head whisked its tail and swam away, a fish.

Thus the mother who, because of her evil ways, had lost the highest that mortal can attain, was destined forever to play the humbler role. But even against her evil will she made herself useful to man by becoming the fish now found in our rivers called by the Cree Indians, *namao*.

#### THE YOUNGER BOY BECOMES WOLF.

There was now no immediate cause for fear but still the boy's predicament was great. Fortunately it was summertime and Wesakaychak found enough berries to keep himself and his little brother alive. They were very lonely and he found it very difficult to keep the little one happy.

Be it remembered that they were the first human children. Nothing in the way of toys, with which people are wont to keep the young ones amused, were in existence as yet. Wesakaychak stripped the bark off a willow and wound it into a ball. With this he amused his little brother who cried very often.

How long these solitary children lived alone in the wilderness nobody knows. At night Wesakaychak used to look up to the skies and through his tears he would see his father, and the sense of companionship this gave him was some comfort to his lonely heart.

One day as the boys were playing with the ball on the bank of the river, they saw a canoe approaching. It was wonderful to see it come of itself against the current. There was somebody in it, but he was not paddling. The only thing he did was to hit the canoe on the side now and again, and this would serve to quicken its speed.

When he came near enough to be seen distinctly, Wesakaychak saw that the occupant was a creature similar to himself, only rougher and more hairy in appearance. The canoe stopped of itself when it came to a point opposite to where they were. The boys continued to play, and as the little boy threw the ball it took a queer curving flight, as if drawn aside from the line of its course; and it fell into the canoe.

"Oh-h! Let us have it!" cried Wesakaychak. "It is the only thing I have to comfort my little brother with!" The stranger placed it on the

flat of his paddle and held it out. "Come and get it!" said he in a strange, cunning voice. Wesakaychak walked into the water and was about to take the ball when, with a dexterous movement of the paddle, the stranger scooped him up and landed him prostrate in the canoe.

"Let me out!" cried Wesakaychak in anguish. "I must go back to my little brother who needs me!" The monster struck the side of the canoe and it sped swiftly on.

"Let me go! Or else take my little brother too!" pleaded the sobbing boy; but with a self-satisfied grin, the man struck his canoe again and gradually sped on, leaving the little boy far behind on the bank. Wesakaychak heard his brother cry, "Brother! Brother! I will be a wolf! I will be a wolf! Oo-o-o-o-ow-w-." Through his tears Wesakaychak saw a young gray wolf run away into the woods. He cried and cried till he fell asleep, totally exhausted.

In due time, Waymesosiw, — for such was the name of this being, — arrived at his lodge. He placed the sleeping boy on the ground, and turned his canoe over him. He seemed to be in great spirits. He spoke to his elder daughter, "I have brought a companion for you; go and get him. He is asleep beneath the canoe." The girl went out, but returned in a very short time, disgust on her face. "I do not want the swollen-faced little man," said she. "He is handsome," replied Waymesosiw. "He has been crying! You, Younger One, go and see how you like him then."

Now, the younger of the two girls seemed to be more human than any of the rest of the family. She too went out but more quietly. Finding the boy, she took pity on him. She washed his face in the river, and, waking him up, did all she could to bring comfort into his heart. She asked him about his past life, and, strange to say, she seemed familiar with the main events of it. News traveled rapidly through the land in those days, for animals and birds had free intercourse with each other. He told her what befell his little brother and she assured him that he would be able to take good care of himself, until such time as he himself would be able to look for him. A sympathy seemed to exist between them, and the boy, comforted greatly, walked with her to the lodge with every show of confidence.

In a day or two his face and eyes, which had been swollen, regained their normal state and he was seen to be a very handsome young man. The older girl was greatly chagrined at having rejected him and now did everything she could to win him over, but without any success. Between Wesakaychak and the younger girl there was mutual attraction and sympathy. She had given him that friendship for which he had long been hungry. While courteous to the older girl, he felt nothing that had a semblance of affection for her. As time went on he grew to manhood, and he found himself in love with the younger one. Waymesosiw giving his consent, he took her to wife, thereby incurring the deep hatred of the elder sister.

## WESAKAYCHAK KILLS THE CRIMSON EAGLE.

Now Waymesosiw was a bad one. His one great desire was to kill whatever came within his reach. In allowing the union between Wesakaychak and his daughter, he had an ulterior motive. It would give him a hold on the young man and many opportunities would be his to bring about his death. He was full of craftiness; always careful in preserving that deportment which becomes a father-in-law, he, more by suggestion than by direct speech, managed to have the young man undertake dangerous tasks.

One day Wesakaychak, having returned from a long hunt, sat beside the fires, evidently thinking seriously. "I wonder," said he, turning to his wife, "I wonder where I could get some straight saskatoon-berry willows."

Waymesosiw, who, according to custom, never addressed his son in-law directly, hastened to ask, "What did he say, daughter?" The young woman, who had very little respect for her father, replied, "He is asking where there are straight willows; but I would like to know how it is that you, who are so deaf, as a rule, are able to hear when you are not spoken to." "Splendid," said the old man, not at all put out by the words of his daughter. "I know of an island where there are such things. I shall paddle my son-in-law across thither tomorrow morning."

Wesakaychak, having accepted the offer, the two were on their way early the next day. The old man would strike the canoe with his paddle and it would shoot along speedily. At length they came to an island which was thickly wooded, and Wesakaychak stepped out of the canoe. No sooner had he done this than Waymesosiw struck the canoe and it slid back into the lake away from the shore. From a safe distance the old man said these words, "Crimson Eagle! I am leaving my son-in-law. You may eat him."

Wesakaychak, who had never quite trusted the old man, was not surprised at this treachery. He watched the canoe receding into the distance and then, turning away, walked boldly into the woods. He had not long to wait.

A crimson light flooded the grass and trees around him, and looking up hastily he saw a great bird preparing to swoop down on him. Grasping a mallet he had made for himself and into which had been willed much magic power, he waited. Almost with the speed of light the bird swooped down, and the next moment Wesakaychak had struck it to the ground. It was a fortunate stroke. He had timed it accurately; and the bird lay dead at his feet. From its body he plucked some down and then, having cut a number of willows, he killed a large gull. He stripped the skin off this, placed it on himself and flew across the lake to this home, passing unseen over the canoe of Waymesosiw.

The joy of his anxious wife was indeed great when he arrived at his home, having survived the treachery of the old man.

When Waymesosiw landed he had a smile of satisfaction on his cunning face. He had enjoyed himself immensely. Imagine his surprise, therefore, when he came into his home and saw Wesakaychak sitting there contentedly, paring away the bark from the saskatoon willows which he had brought. A little later, seeing a bunch of crimson feathers hanging to one of the tent poles his face blackened for an instant — but only for an instant. He was his own composed self in another moment and was examining the willows interestedly.

Some time after this Wesakaychak again had occasion to ask his wife a question. This time he wanted to know where he could find the quills of a crane. As before, the old man, who was ordinarily deaf, asked his daughter what her husband wanted. As before, she told him, but in a very ungracious way, for she knew he was seeking to destroy Wesakaychak.

"I know of an island where cranes are very plentiful and where quills can be found lying on the mud by the hundreds," said he. "I shall be pleased to paddle my son-in-law thither tomorrow morning." Wesakaychak knew that the old man meant to bring him to his death, but he was willing to take another risk, and he accepted the offer.

The next morning found them both in the canoe rapidly approaching an island. Here the same scene was re-enacted as before. The old man left Wesakaychak stranded on the island and from a safe distance yelled out, "Thou Great Serpent! I am leaving my son-in-law for you to eat."

As Wesakaychak began to collect quills which the cranes had dropped while moulting, he heard a sound. Turning to look, he saw a gigantic, horned serpent wriggling towards him. Its great jaws were open and he noticed with a shudder that its teeth were quite long and extremely sharp. Grasping his mallet he waited breathlessly. The serpent came on. At the right instant Wesakaychak leaped to one side and struck. The serpent wriggled convulsively and was soon dead. The mallet had again done its work.

Standing on the prone body of the monster, Wesakaychak said these words, "When man inhabits this earth, reptiles such as this will not be on land; nor will such birds as the Crimson Eagle infest the heavens."

Having stripped another gull, he put on its skin and was soaring away across the lake once more victorious over the treachery of his crafty and cruel father-in-law, and the disappointed old man found him at home again, quietly splitting quills and shaping them.

#### WESAKAYCHAK DESTROYS THE GREAT MOOSE.

Waymesosiw was now desparate. He had made two great efforts to have Wesakaychak killed and both had failed. In his despair he dreamed and saw the Crimson Eagle and the Great Serpent, both of whom had not only failed to destroy Wesakaychak but had themselves been killed. Great was the joy of Waymesosiw, therefore, when he again heard his

son-in-law ask his wife where he could find some sinew. Forgetting even to address him through his daughter, the old man offered to show the young man a place where he could find all the sinew he wanted.

The crafty Waymesosiw remembered that there was a Great Moose living in the Northland. He would plan to go with his son-in-law in quest of this animal. If it so happened that Wesakaychak escaped with his life in trying to kill the animal, then surely some other opportunity to destroy him would present itself.

With this design in mind Waymesosiw confided to Wesakaychak that he knew where there was a Great Moose, and would conduct the young man to its neighborhood. Of course Wesakaychak accepted the invitation, and they made due preparation, for it was to be a long and perilous journey.

When all was ready and they were to make their start the next morning Wesakaychak's wife had a private talk with him. She told him that she had had a dream in which she saw what was to meet them on the journey. "A-a-ay! My husband," said she, "be careful when you come to the haunts of the Great Moose. My father will pretend to be lame and will be some distance behind you all the time. Watch carefully and be ready! Here is some down. As soon as the Great Moose approaches, blow on this and say the words, 'Let me be like unto thee?' Immediately you will be transformed into this, the lightest of all things and you will be safe. When, in time the Great Moose is exhausted, you will know what to do. After you have killed the creature and you camp for the night, pretend to sleep but watch my father till something happens. I will be with you in spirit."

Morning dawned and the two men were on their way to the haunts of the Great Moose. It was a very difficult trip but the old man kept easily. Many days they walked before they saw tracks which seemed to be most unnatural so great were they.

"Ough!" said Waymesosiw. "The Great Moose!" Wesakaychak could hardly believe that any animal, however large, could have hoofs of such prodigious size. He at once secretly untied a small package from his belt and took out the piece of down his wife had given him. True to her dream he noticed that Waymesosiw dropped behind, pretending to be lame. Wesakaychak of course wisely paid no attention to this, but went on, carefully looking for the huge animal.

Suddenly there was a mighty crash among some tall spruce trees. Wesakaychak had just enough time to blow on the down and to repeat the formula which was to bring about the change in him when the beast was upon him. With a deafening roar the Great Moose fought and bellowed, as it tried to strike and to trample on the down, which was Wesakaychak. The down, however, quietly blew around in the air, sometimes settling on his head, his nose or other parts of the great body. All day the Moose struggled but with no success. Towards evening it sank down

exhausted and Wesakaychak, assuming his own shape, killed it. Standing erect on the big body of his victim, he said, "When man inhabits this earth, such animals will not be. They are too powerful and would be a menace to life."

It was some time before Waymesosiw came back. He had fled and left his son-in-law to his fate. Listening from the top of a high tree he had guessed from the length of the struggle that the young man was holding his own in the desperate conflict. When finally the noise ceased, he shrewdly supposed that the Moose was dead. Waymesosiw was greatly disappointed at the outcome of the fight; but he made up his mind to act as if greatly pleased, for the time being, hoping that by night he might be able to bring about something harmful to his partner.

Waymesosiw pretended great joy at the death of the Great Moose and busied himself preparing the camp and cooking their evening meal. He seemed unusually jovial and told many a yarn after they had eaten, as they sat for a long time before the blazing fire. The Great Dipper had turned considerably around the North Star when they laid themselves down to sleep. Something about the actions of the old man, when they hung up their clothes on the branches, awakened Wesakaychak's suspicions. He lay down, however, and watched secretly while Waymesosiw fell asleep almost immediately. A little later he got up very quietly and, taking his clothes from where he had hung them, changed them with Waymesosiw's, which he hung where his own had been. Having done this without awakening the other, he lay down again quietly and watched for developments.

Waymesosiw's snoring ended with a gasp! There was a moment's pause, and then he raised his head slowly. The big logs were still burning brightly and he had to shade his eyes to see his son-in-law across the fire. "Are you asleep?" he asked in a subdued voice loud enough to be heard, if Wesakaychak were awake but not loud enough to awaken him if he should be asleep. The latter kept on breathing regularly as if asleep but actually watching through the corner of his eye. He saw Waymesosiw get up, approach what he thought were the young man's clothes and deliberately place them on the fire before he lay down again. Then, when they were irretrievably destroyed, he yelled, "Son-in-law, wake up! Your clothes are burning!" Wesakaychak jumped up and examined the burning clothes. "No," said he. "These are yours. Mine are dry now and I will take them."

Waymesosiw now knew that he had been outwitted, but true to his crafty nature, he made no comment. He had been worsted; but, be it said to his credit, outwardly, at least, he bore no grudge.

Morning came and Wesakaychak made preparations to go back home. Waymesosiw neither complained nor asked for help. Only when Wesakaychak was starting off did he speak of his plans. "You have beaten me, young man," said he. "Go back to your wife. Your way is better than

mine. I too will go home but more slowly." For a moment Wesakaychak nearly had pity on him, but hoping to give him a lesson, he left him; he knew that the old one would not die but would eventually come through not much the worse for his experience and perhaps wiser.

Waymesosiw left alone gathered a great pile of wood; and having secured a very large round boulder, he fired it till it was red hot. Then with a green pole he began to roll it in the direction of his home. The heat from it kept him warm; and as soon as the stone would begin to cool off he would heat it up again. Thus he traveled slowly and painfully, day after day.

Wesakaychak on the other hand came easily back to his home; and the joy of his wife was great. It was summertime before Waymesosiw arrived, a wiser man and changed. His lust for killing had left him. His naturally genial temperament came to the fore and in time he was liked by Wesakaychak. Thus all was well, and the home of Waymesosiw became a place of peace and contentment.

#### WESAKAYCHAK MAKES BOW AND ARROWS.

Having procured sinew from the Great Moose's body, Wesakaychak now had all he wanted for what he had long intended to make — a weapon for man. Once more he straightened up the saskatoon willows he had cut. With the dampened sinew he tied the split quills on to one end of each willow; to the other end he fastened sharp, triangular, flat pieces of stone. He added a nick at the end to which the quills were tied. Thus was made the first arrow. Using a longer stick and some twisted sinew Wesakaychak made the first bow. The idea seemed good to him. He went out into the woods and tried out his invention. His expectations were more than realized. With continual practice he soon came to be very skilful in the use of the bow and arrow, and many were the animals he killed.

Having satisfied himself that the weapon was effective Wesakaychak set to work patiently making other bows and arrows. Quiver after quiver was filled, and when he felt he had made enough, he spoke to his wife in these words, "There is a great camp of beings like ourselves a great distance north of where we are. I see some of them now and then in my long hunting trips. They tell me that there are a number of animals, known as Up-standing Cattle and also by the name of Short Noses, who prey on the people and are slowly exterminating them. I must go to their rescue."

His wife being willing that he should go to bring relief to these "people", if such they were, Wesakaychak made careful preparations, packing the quivers into a bundle which he could carry on his back. Assuring his wife that no harm would befall him, he struck out for the camp of those he hoped to rescue. He did not know exactly where they were but soon found

the tracks of one who had been hunting. These eventually led him to the camp where he was received hospitably and conducted to the tent of the leading man.

From this personage he learned the details regarding the Short Noses. They would come among the "people" apparently for friendly reasons and then suddenly they would pounce upon them and carry off a certain number. These they would eat. "It is almost time now for them to come," said the host, "and our lives are full of fear."

Wesakaychak felt that he had not come too soon. Something must be done at once. He asked his host to call all the men into the tent. This being done and the tent filled up with all who responded, he untied his bundle and gave a bow and quiver to each man. "You will watch me use these," said he, "and then you will all practice to make yourselves skilful in their use. Next time the Short Noses come, you yourselves must kill them all. None must be left alive."

Then Wesakaychak went out of the tent, followed by all the men. He aimed carefully at a tree some distance away; and the next instant the arrow was buried in it. A murmur of surprise went through the crowd. All wanted to try the new weapon, and in a little while everybody was shooting. In a very few days every man was able to use the bow and arrow and the men made them for their wives and children who also in time learned to use them.

A day came when the Short Noses arrived. They mixed with the people in a friendly way, their purpose being to find out which ones were fat and in fit condition to be eaten. Now Wesakaychak had arranged that all should act simultaneously. So it was that when he blew a whistle every person seized his bow and the slaughter began. The astonished Short Noeses were unable to do anything. They were shot down, right and left. Not one of them escaped. Those that were trying to flee, Wesakaychak brought down from a distance. The earth was at length freed from these beings who because of their superior physical strength were killing off the people.

"In the days when man multiplies," said Wesakaychak, "such as you will not be." So saying, he took the dead Short Noses one by one and pronounced what they were to be. From each dead body ran away an animal or beast, a moose, a deer, a mouse, a rat, a skunk and all the others which are existent this day and which are used by man.

After receiving the thanks of all the people he had saved, Wesakaychak made his way back to his home, satisfied that once again he had done his duty.

#### WESAKAYCHAK LOOKS FOR HIS BROTHER.

Happy though Wesakaychak was with his young wife, one thing served to mar his contentment, and that was the uncertainty of his brother's fate. He lost many a night's sleep when it stormed, for the picture of his

little brother running along the bank of the river, crying after him, was stamped indelibly on his mind. He must go back and find him. One night he told his young wife this; and she gave her consent to his journey.

Without making much preparation, he started off one morning, heading straight for the place where he had last seen the wolf run away from the bank of the river into the woods. Arriving there he began to search for some sign which would give an indication of his brother's presence. Sure enough, there was a pile of whitened bones that had once been a moose; this was his brother's first kill. He went further, and after much traveling, found other bones piled up neatly. An ordinary wolf would have left the bones scattered. This was the work of his brother.

Day after day he searched, and his patience was invariably rewarded by finding places where his brother had brought down some animal. Wesakaychak's quest became more hopeful every day; not only was he able to see the tracks of his brother in time, but little signs of reasoned movements, for we must remember that the brother was both human and animal. Because of this fact Wesakaychak was enabled to know the general direction to take.

Fresher and fresher grew the tracks of the wolf, even as they increased in size. The brother was evidently a full-grown wolf now; and Wesakaychak felt that any moment he might come upon him. He looked around carefully as he went so as not to miss him. Suddenly there was a crash and a large gray wolf bounded away from behind a willow bush. "Brother! Brother! It is I. Do not be afraid of me!" cried Wesakaychak. The wolf brother stopped and approached fawningly. Wesakaychak was very much moved to see his only blood relation once again. It is not recorded what they did in order to show their mutual joy at meeting once again, for it is not good taste with Indian narrators to describe too minutely things which are sacred to those immediately concerned. Enough to say that the wolf confessed a feeling of dread of all that seemed human. He did not feel at ease even with his own brother.

"I will help you to overcome that natural shrinking," said Wesakaychak, setting to work to build a sweat-tent. Both brothers went into the tent. After they had had enough and had dried themselves, Wesakaychak burned sweet grass, waving it all over his brother's body. The bath brought out the perspiration from the wolf, and served to rid the young man of animal pollution. The waving and burning sweet grass awoke in him the human qualities and feelings which to some extent had been dormant while he was a wolf. This ceremonial completed, the wolf, now human once more, took his place by his brother without fear or shrinking and with a great show of joy.

Happy days passed, and warm was the welcome accorded to the brother by Wesakaychak's wife. So rejoiced was she to see her brother-in-law handsome in his young manhood,—almost an exact image of her husband — that she delighted to make fine garments for him and to

surround him with those little comforts without which he had lived so long. With a woman's intuition, however, she knew that something was on his mind. He seemed to be preoccupied at times and one day she saw him sitting on a hill for a long time, without so much as moving his drooping head. She mentioned the matter to her husband; and Wesakaychak asked him kindly that same day if there were anything the matter. "All is well here, brother," replied Wolf. "You and my sister-in-law have been so kind to me. I have a wife and son in the forest. Something tells me they are in trouble and I must ask you to give me leave to go to see them and put things right for them."

Wesakaychak gave his consent to this very willingly. His mind revolted at the thought of a creature partly endowed with human qualities, as the young wolf would be, being left to the mercy of the creatures of the wild. "Go, brother," said he, "Go, and may good fortune be yours. I have every faith in your manhood. One warning, however, I will give you: Never under any circumstances wade into lake or stream. Do not forget."

Thus, the Wolf was again separated from his brother to go back into the wilderness. He ran for a day and a night to where he had left his wolf family. He himself was again in the form of a large gray wolf. Approaching the wigwam where he had left his wife, he peeped in, and there, instead of his own family, was the Wolverine and two young ones. Where were his wife and son?

Full of rage though he was, he would not do anything to the intruders as yet. He sniffed around and smelling fire, ran into a bush close by. There stood an old wigwam from which much smoke was coming. He peeped in and saw his wife's mother and his own boy, both famished and scarcely able to sit up. A feeling of hot indignation came over him as he went in.

"What is this that has happened? Where is my wife?" he asked. "A-a-a-ay!" replied the old woman. "I have done my best to preserve the life of your son, but we are now both very weak. The Wolverine killed your wife and sent us out to starve. He allowed me to take my old wigwam, else we should have perished long ago. Day after day he killed beavers but never once did he give us anything to eat. His two little sons used to come secretly with little morsels of food, but in time he suspected. Catching them doing it, he worked himself into such a fury that he almost killed them. We are now so weak that we should have died had you not come."

The Wolf sat in silence for some time. Then without saying a word he went out and soon came back with some meat. "Eat that," he said. "As soon as you have had enough, I want you to move camp to the hill there, where you will find moose meat. I would like to kill the Wolverine now; but it is too insignificant a deed for a man to do. He cannot kill moose for himself, this Wolverine, but he loves moose meat. Plan a way

to put an end to his life. Let him die at the hands of an old and weak woman. I shall be close at hand to see that no harm befalls you."

The camp was moved in a short time. When the Wolverine woke up, he went outside and was surprised to see no smoke in the bush. "They are dead!" said he, as he walked over. In the next instant, however, he was sniffing around, for he detected an odor of venison. "The boy has killed a moose, and they have moved camp. I must make friends, for he will be useful to me," he thought. Taking two beavers, he tied them together. Laboriously dragging them up the hill, he put them at the door of the wigwam. "Whew!" said he as usual. "I have brought beaver for you and the old woman." "*Tawao!* (There is room)," said the boy. Wolverine came in grinning, for he was joyful to see meat being fried on a spit." Wolverine continued to smile ingratiatingly; for this animal was ever the slyest, dirtiest, meanest and most cunning of all the beasts of the land.

The meat was just then ready for eating. The old woman (for such we must call her, inasmuch as in these old narratives, there is only a slight demarcation between what is human and what is animal) the old woman placed the meat before the Wolverine. "Before you begin," said she, "I must ask you to humor my desires. It has always been the custom of my life that I ask all who partake of the first killing of my children and grandchildren to do so with their eyes closed. I desire you to humor me in this." "*Tapwā* (truly)," said Wolverine, as he accommodatingly closed his eyes.

The old woman, taking a big club, struck him on the head and he toppled over, stunned, his tail swaying and toes quivering. When he came to, the old woman was making excuses humbly. "It was so unfortunate of me to drop that bone on our guest's head," said she. The Wolverine hastened to say that it was nothing, and began to eat again with his eyes closed. This time she struck him with such good will that he died.

The gray Wolf, coming in, surveyed the scene before him. "It is well," said he. "Drag his body away, but spare his young ones. They are fit to live and to perpetuate his race."

Wolf stayed with his son and the old woman for some time. Daily he took the former out with him on hunting expeditions and the young wolf learned ways and means of procuring food from the forest.

When the young one was grown up, — for it takes animals only a comparatively short time to reach maturity, — the father decided to leave them. Calling his son to him, he said, "It is time now that I must leave you. I am human and it is right that you should work out your destiny for yourself. You must be the father of your kind. Play your part well in the world that is to be."

Bidding tender goodbye to both of them, he started out. Young Wolf went with his father part of the way. It was a clear, moonlit night. Up

on the hill they paused. "Look up to the northern sky," said Wolf. "That Oochaykatahk (The Great Dipper) is your grandfather. Now and then think of him and speak to him. Goodbye, my son."

The young Wolf, handsome and strong, stood silhouetted in the moonlight. His head was held up proudly and as he looked up at the Great Dipper; his howl rang out yearningly, "Oo-oo-o-ow-w-w!!" The father slipped away into the great forest.

#### WESAKAYCHAK RESCUES HIS BROTHER.

After taking leave of his son the gray Wolf traveled up and down the land, killing animals for his food as he went. He never forgot the warning of his brother. Whatever happened he always avoided going into water. He did not know why he should but he knew Wesakaychak had some good reason for having given the warning. Often he came to a river and if he were unable to jump across, he would stop, and then go some other way.

One day, however, he was chasing a fine young deer, and the very fleetness of the animal whetted his desire to run it down. It was not so much the need of food that made him chase so long but the swiftness of the animal pitted against his own. He must get it at all costs.

Just as Wolf had almost caught up with his quarry they came to a large lake, and the terrified deer leapt into it without hesitation. Wolf, too excited with the chase to remember his brother's warning, jumped, in after the animal. He had gone only a little way when he remembered but it was too late! Something powerful caught him from underneath, and he was pulled into the water.

In the meantime Wesakaychak was worrying. He felt as if something were wrong. He could not get his brother out of his mind. Finally his anxiety became so great that he started out once more, after taking affectionate leave of his family.<sup>1</sup>

Through the forest he went searching for his brother, and in time his efforts were rewarded. He found his brother's tracks and they were comparatively fresh. Walking and running alternately, Wesakaychak followed these tracks and at last came to a place where Wolf had been chasing a deer. By all signs it was a hot chase, and he felt a strange foreboding of some evil connected with the tracks he was following.

All that day he walked, and when night fell over the land, not being able to see any longer, he lay down to rest. Because of his anxiety, he was unable to sleep. As soon as dawn came he was off again and the sun was not high in the heavens when he arrived at the lake. The tracks

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<sup>1</sup> Whether or not he ever saw them again is not known, for they do not appear again in the narrative. It is supposed that they survived a general catastrophe that later took place and became the founders of the human race.

of both the deer and the wolf led unmistakably into the water. He knew what had happened! Poor Wesakaychak sat down to think, but no plan came to him. Being wise, however, he decided to wait and allow time to offer some solution.

As he sat on the shore of the lake, Wesakaychak noticed a kingfisher perched on a tree close by. The bird was gazing intently into the water. "What is it you are looking at?" asked Wesakaychak.

"At those Sea Lions playing with the skin of Wesakaychak's brother," replied the bird.

"Do they ever come ashore?" inquired the man.

"Yes, they do," was the reply. "They always work their way towards the shore and when they are tired, they lie down to sun themselves on the beach."

Wesakaychak went to a nearby bluff covered with dry spruce. Calling to his aid all land animals and birds, he bound them to secrecy. He told them that the Sea Lions would cause a flood to be in the land and all must work to make a great raft.

The beavers at once started to cut the logs down and Wesakaychak and the rest hauled them to an open space in the woods where they tied them together securely. With the advice that they were all to keep within easy reach of the raft, he again made his way down to the lake. The Kingfisher was there again, watching the Sea Lions at play.

"Listen to me," said Wesakaychak. "If you do what I tell you, I will paint you so that you will be one of the prettiest of all birds. I am going to turn myself into an old dry tree here on the beach. The Sea Lions will see me and will suspect something. Argue with them, telling them that the tree has always been there but they have never noticed it before. If you can convince them that all is well, I will reward you as I have said." The bird replied that the would do as Wesakaychak desired.

When the Sea Lions came ashore they noticed the tree. "What is this? How did it come here?" they asked. "O, that has always been there," said the Kingfisher. They were very suspicious nevertheless, but in the end the bird convinced them that their fears were unfounded. They lay down and were soon fast asleep.

Then Wesakaychak assumed his own form again and going amongst the sleeping Sea Lions either killed or wounded them all. Some that were not so badly wounded managed to slide back into the water. Securing his brother's skin, Wesakaychak blew on it; and it gradually came back to life.

As for the Kingfisher he rewarded him handsomely. He painted him as he had promised, drawing a line around the neck with white clay and placing a tuft of beautiful feathers on the top of the head. Then this vain bird, pleased with himself, flew over the calm waters of the lakes in order to see his own reflection. He was the first kingfisher to be as such birds are this day.

## THE FLOOD.

The day following Wesakaychak's adventure with the Sea Lions on the beach, while walking along he met a toad which was in the guise of an old medicine woman. She was shaking her rattle jerkily in time with her hopping. As she went, she sang in a sort of monotone, "On my way to conjure! On my way to conjure!"

"Where are you going, grandmother?" asked Wesakaychak.

"I am on my way to conjure over the chief of the Sea Lions who was sorely wounded by Wesakaychak yesterday," she replied.

"What do you do when you conjure?"

Being a garrulous creature, the toad in a husky, gurgling voice, explained her usual procedure. When Wesakaychak had learned all he wanted to know, he killed her, and stripping her skin off, put it on himself. Taking the rattle in his hand, he hopped away as she had done.

When Wesakaychak came to the lodge of the Sea Lions he heard a great deal of groaning. "When I conjure," said he, "it is my custom at this stage to have the place in which I perform darkened, and everybody else must keep away." His wishes were of course respected; and no sooner was he alone with his patients than he went from one to the other, killing them properly this time.

When he had completed his task he ripped off the toad skin and fled for his life. It was none too soon. He just managed to reach the raft when the flood came. Many of the animals reached the raft but hundreds perished unable to get there. Some were on the hills and these Wesakaychak rescued.

In time even the high hills were submerged, and the world was drowned.

When at length the water seemed to rest, Wesakaychak began to consider what to do. He called the Otter, the Beaver, and the little Muskrat to him. First he sent the Otter down to see if it could bring up a little mud. This little animal was down for a long time before he came up unconscious, although he was kicking feebly with one hind leg. Wesakaychak blew on him and brought him back to life.

Then the Beaver, taking his turn, was down much longer but he also came up unconscious and without any mud. The hope of all life now rested on the Muskrat. He dived and they had given him up for dead when he came up, kicking feebly and unconscious. Wesakaychak blew on him and noticed a small piece of a leaf on one of his claws. "I reached the tops of trees," said the little animal; "but I was faint and had to come up. I will make another try." Once more the plucky, little muskrat dived. All awaited his return breathlessly. Surely he would succeed! Time went by but there was no sign of him.

Suddenly, one of the birds that had been flying about, looking down into the water, gave a call, "Muskrat is coming up!" It was true enough. The little animal soon emerged from the water, to all appearances dead.

Wesakaychak breathed on him and brought him back to life as before. There on the sole of his foot was a little bit of mud and some more on his mouth. This certainly was precious material in a world of waters! Wesakaychak picked it carefully and making it into a ball began to blow upon it, whereupon it seemed to grow rapidly. With his paddle-like tail the Beaver began to beat it out flat, while Wesakaychak kept on blowing.

How long the process lasted is not known. In the time they could not see where the shores of the land they were making touched the waters. Wesakaychak rested and asked his brother, the gray Wolf, to run around in order to judge the size of the land.

In two days the Wolf came back and reported that it was not large enough as yet. Again Wesakaychak began to blow. This time the Wolf, once more detailed to investigate, did not return for many a day, and when he did come back he reported that the land was not large enough. Again the man worked. This time he sent the Crow, who did not return. Then Wesakaychak stopped, concluding that the earth was large enough.

Thus, out of the Flood land was reclaimed and Life multiplied again. Many of the forms of life that had been too vicious and dangerous to man were no more. The Muskrat, the Beaver and the Otter were rewarded for the share they had had in the restoration of the land and were told that from thenceforth they would be equally at home on land and water. They are so to this day. The gray Wolf did not resume his man-like form but ever after that lived with his brother, and today his descendants — those most faithful companions and protectors of man, the dogs, — are to be seen wherever Indian lodges are.

#### WESAKAYCHAK SNARES THE SUN.

Wesakaychak turned his attention to other matters. Everything did not work just right. Perhaps the most pressing need had to do with a more regular supply of light and heat. The Sun was only an occasional visitor to those who lived in the Earth and the long periods between the visits were very trying to life. Something must be done.

After careful consideration, Wesakaychak made up his mind to catch the great heavenly body. He set a great snare right in the path which it was wont to take and caught it the very next time it passed. In vain the Sun struggled to free itself; the cords by which it was held fast were too strong for it.

At first everybody was delighted but soon it was found that there was danger of the inhabitants being scorched to death by the proximity of the great body. They would gladly have released it, but no one was able to go near enough to undo or to cut the snare. In desperation Wesakaychak invited the spirit of the Sun, Anaynake, to a con-

sultation. The result of this was a compromise. Wesakaychak was to try to liberate the Sun, while Anaynake promised to come near the edges of the Earth only in the mornings and evenings while in the day time it was to come just near enough to warm the Earth. Kee-watin, the North Wind, was told to work in conjunction with the Sun and the arrangement was adopted whereby one was to retire as the other advanced and vice versa. Each was to exercise its power in turn, having respect for the rights and efforts of the other. Everything seemed satisfactorily settled.

The problem that now had to be confronted was the liberation of the Sun. It could not free itself, and so far no one had made any attempt to take the risk involved. Wesakaychak called a mass meeting of all the creatures of the Earth and laid the matter before them. He promised that, whoever released the Sun would receive special favors from him.

The Beaver, though once before he had been useful, was yet an insignificant kind of animal. He was held in no esteem in the animal world. He had only a few small teeth and his fur was sparse and bristly like that of a pig. He was, however, one of those creatures that are always to the fore and whose greatest desire in life is to out-do others in everything. He boldly offered to release the Sun. There was a burst of laughter at this and a look of doubt came over Wesakaychak's face, but he had asked for someone to volunteer and he had to accept the Beaver's offer.

The Beaver trotted off awkwardly and anxiously did all the animals watch. Some said the fool would never go near and others held that it is often those who are foolish who surpass others in doing things which no sane creature would attempt to do. Suddenly they saw the great ball of light arise majestically from the place of its captivity. It sped on that course which to this day it has kept. Never once has it broken its promise to Wesakaychak. Faithful has it been to the word of Anaynake.

The Beaver was pitiful to look upon when it returned. Three blackened stumps were all that remained of its teeth. The swinish hair he had before was all burned away and only his half-scorched skin remained. Wesakaychak in gratitude clothed him in a most beautiful fur coat, gave him a lovely set of flat teeth, sharp and broad, admirably fitted to cut down trees for building purposes.

He was the envy of all those who were wont to mock and laugh at him. As a remembrance of the deed the Beaver did for the inhabitants of the world, his teeth were made to be of a brown color as if they had been scorched. They are so to this day, and what is there more beautiful than the fur of this animal and what is there better adapted to the cutting down of trees than its teeth? The Beaver

did not abuse his new gifts, but managed to live down his former reputation by leading a life of quiet seclusion and of incessant industry.

## WESAKAYCHAK RIDES ON THE MOON.

One evening Wesakaychak lay on his back on a hill admiring the full moon. How beautiful it was and how lovely it would be to ride upon the great bright disk across the heavens! After all, why should he not! In a moment he was on his feet and the next instant was traveling to where the moon was wont to appear from the depths of the earth at the point where land and sky meet. He walked all night but he did not seem to come any nearer to the moon. He must give up that plan and think of another.

The next evening Wesakaychak saw a crane and an idea came into his head. Why not ask it to take him up to the moon. "Come here, my little brother," said he. "Take me up to yonder moon that is rising in the skies, and I will repay you." The crane consented and Wesakaychak, holding on to the legs of the bird, was wafted up towards the moon. On and on they went and still the moon seemed far away. At last the crane was tired and Wesakaychak himself felt as if his arms were going to break. They went on and on. It became serious for both. „Hurry! Hurry, or I will have to let go!" cried Wesakaychak in anguish. The crane gave a short call and the man knew they were almost there. A final spurt! They both fell down in a dead faint. When Wesakaychak regained consciousness, he found himself lying on the very edge of the moon, and his cramped hands were still holding on to the legs of the bird. He noticed that the strain he had put upon them in this upward flight had stretched them to a most abnormal length. "He will be able to walk around with good speed," said he; and such is the case with the crane today.

After they had had a rest Wesakaychak thanked the bird. He painted a beautiful crimson spot between its eyes. The crane was delighted and took leave of its benefactor in a very cordial way.

Wesakaychak now gave up his time to admiring the scenery round about him. It was beautiful. There were the stars somewhat dimmed but yet visible; he saw his father, the Great Dipper; there was his mother's body, the Small Dipper; he saw the earth, and it looked very far away. He enjoyed himself greatly. Oh! the ecstasy of the swift, smooth motion over the heavens! He made up his mind to stay there all his life.

Things, however, took on a different aspect as time went on. The moon decreased in size steadily. Wesakaychak found his seat becoming sharper and sharper, till at last he was holding on to the horns of the moon. Every moment made his situation more precarious. How was he to get down? This problem solved itself very easily. The moon

disappeared from under him and he descended head over heels, sideways, and every other conceivable way. Seeing the earth rapidly approaching him as he thought, he yelled out, "A soft place! A soft place! It was I who made the earth!"

He fell into a soft place, for the earth, obedient to his call, formed in itself a soft spot into which Wesakaychak fell head foremost. He wriggled and squirmed for a long time before he was able to extricate himself. All covered with mud and water he presented a most pitiful sight. Feeling angry at his mishap, he stood up in as dignified a posture as was possible under the circumstances and cursed the soft spot of ground which had saved his life. "When man inhabits the earth," said he, "such spots as this will be waste and of no benefit to anyone. They will be called 'mus-kake'<sup>1</sup> (mosshag)." These exist today and are of no apparent value to man.

#### THE BLINDFOLD DANCE.

Wesakaychak was now leading what was practically the life of a vagabond. He loved to wander about and to find out things for himself and to put them right wherever he found them in need of adjustment.

In the course of his travels he was often very hungry. With his sense of responsibility partially gone, he was becoming careless in his ways. For instance, he never provided for the future, but was content to serve the needs of the present moment as best he could. Instead of going out to hunt, as he used to do, in his earlier life, he was now trying to live on his wits. So it was that, walking along one day, he felt very hungry indeed. He could find no birds eggs, and there were no berries as yet. It is true there were many ducks and geese on the lake close by, but of course he could not catch them. They no longer trusted him, and had become wary and suspicious of him. Still, his gnawing hunger drove him to make a feeble attempt to catch a young one. He waded out and swam after it. The attempt was hopeless. After swimming and diving for some time he gave up with a smile at his stupidity, and decided to use his wits.

Going to the *mus-kake* into which he had fallen, he pulled up a great quantity of moss. Wrapping this up in his robe, he heaved it on to his shoulder, singing as he went, "Blindfold dance I make! Blindfold dance I make!" He walked along the shore of the lake on which the fowl were, apparently paying no attention to them.

Now curiosity is a very common trait among all creatures and birds are no exception. Attracted by the mysterious actions of Wesakaychak, they came all round questioning him. He walked on indifferently, paying no attention to them whatsoever. This only increased their

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<sup>1</sup> Known as "muskeg" in the Canadian wilds.

curiosity, and they followed him eagerly to a place he had selected for what he intended to do.

The birds now had a short consultation, and they appointed one of themselves to ask him what significance there was in his actions. Wesakaychak replied to this in these words, "What you see me doing is a preliminary to a very sacred rite. Only a little while back, I received a new song. The queer thing about it is that it can only be sung inside of a lodge which has but one small opening. If you will build me such an one, I will sing the song for you; and you can dance to it. This bundle, the contents of which you must not see, has to do with the ceremonial."

It was not long before a long lodge was built according to plans given by Wesakaychak. After all were in, they closed themselves in, leaving only one small opening at one end.

As a preliminary to the proceedings that were to take place, Wesakaychak painted the birds, each family having a distinguishing mark: the loon receiving red eyes and spotted back; the stock duck a white ring around the neck; the goose two stripes down the lower jaw; the pintail a brown head and two long tail feathers; and others the peculiar markings they still carry. This he told them was all in preparation for what he called the blindfold dance.

The birds were greatly pleased and were ready to join heartily in what was to take place. The mysteriousness of it added to their enthusiasm. Wesakaychak began to hum a song; it was the new song. He was composing it as he sang. It was not long before the birds were on their feet starting to dance. Wesakaychak stopped them with a severe gesture. He laid a hand reverently on the great bundle he had. "This dance *Pu-suk-wa-pe-se-mo-win* (the blindfold dance)," said he. "Everyone the lodge must close his eyes and make a noise with voice and wing as soon as the dancing begins. No one must look on pain of instant death. This is a serious ceremony and any that are not willing to observe every part of it may go now."

No one offering to go, Wesakaychak gave the word and began to sing. Every bird closed its eyes, flapped its wings and danced, calling in its own peculiar way. It was a noisy dance but it suited Wesakaychak's purpose splendidly. He went along wringing the necks of the fattest ones and stepping on them.

All went well with his scheme till an old bird of the waterhen family took as sly peep through one eye. "Fly, fly for your lives!" yelled he. A great hubbub arose. Wesakaychak managed to trample on the hind part of the waterhen, which he flattened out, leaving the legs of all fowls that belong to that family as they are today. The next instant he was knocked down, and he found it advantageous to remain in a prostrate position. One side of the lodge was burst open and the fowls fled.

The survivors called a meeting in order to discuss ways and means towards punishing Wesakaychak for his evil deed.

## THE MARKINGS ON THE BIRCH TREES.

Having many choice birds in his possession Wesakaychak now made a great fire. He plucked some of the birds and prepared to cook them all at once and in different ways. Some he could roast on a spit, and the rest he would place, feathers and all, in rolls of birch bark in order to retain the fat.

When they were all cooked Wesakaychak found that he was not quite hungry enough to enjoy them properly. He must spare no pains to make the feast a great success. Seeing a pair of birch trees standing side by side he lay down between them. "Get closer to each other and hold me here till I am very hungry; otherwise I will be tempted to begin feasting too soon," said he to them. The birch trees took him at his word and held him fast.

A whiskey-jack came and perched itself on a branch close by. Wesakaychak saw him, and a look of suspicion came over his face. "You foolish little bird," said he. "Do not dare to invite anyone to my feast." The whiskey-jack had not thought of doing so; but now he was off like a shot. Here was a good chance to punish Wesakaychak. He spread the news to such good purpose that in a little while every creature in the forest was feasting on Wesakaychak's cooking. In a very short time nothing but bones was left, and Wesakaychak, tired out with his struggles fell asleep.

How long he slept, nobody knows. He was rudely awakened by a sharp sting in the eye. A buzzard was over him pecking at his eyes. He was still unable to wriggle out of the trap, so he spoke in most brotherly terms to the buzzard, who, however, would do nothing to help him.

Summoning his old time energy Wesakaychak put forth a mighty effort and was free. Seizing the buzzard, he tried to wring its neck violently, at the same time plucking the feathers off its head. This is why this bird has a bald head and a red, inflamed-looking neck today.

Wesakaychak next turned his attention to the birch trees. They, too, must be punished. Taking four long willows he began to strip them, nor did he stop till the willows were all used up. This is why one sees those peculiar canoe-shaped markings on the bark of the birch trees of the present day. He also passed sentence on them that they could never grow anywhere but in moist, low-lying country.

Having meted out such punishment he collected what bones were lying around and gnawed away at them to get the marrow, for he was very hungry.

## WESAKAYCHAK AND THE "STARTLERS"

It was after this that Wesakaychak was sauntering along aimlessly, having no particular destination in view. The whole land was his home and what mattered it where night overtook him? One place was as good as another to him as long as he was able to procure food.

As he went along he came upon a nest of young prairie chickens. "Little prairie chickens," asked he, "pray, what is your name?" "That is our name you call us by," they replied. "Everything that breathes has two names," said Wesakaychak. "I myself have three: Wesakaychak, Nanaposo, and Mutchekewis. Do not tell me you have only one name." "Well, then," replied the little birds, "we are sometimes called startlers."

"Startlers indeed!" said Wesakaychak. "What can you startle?" As a mild protest against the suitability of their name, he carefully dirtied their faces with wet mud. Laughing at the effect of his work, he went on his way.

When the mother bird arrived and saw the state of her young ones, she was angry. She talked abusively about Wesakaychak till she was out of breath. She determined to avenge the injury inflicted on her feelings.

How to do this was the question. She worked out a plan, and, acting on it with great dispatch, invited all the prairie chickens in the district to come to help her punish him who had dealt so disrespectfully with her. Many came in response to her appeal for help and they settled themselves among the tall grass on either side of a river over which Wesakaychak was wont to jump when he had occasion to come that way.

As luck would have it, he came along in a short time. When fairly near to the river, he took a run in order to make a good jump. At the moment when he was in the act of springing every chicken in the vicinity flew up with a great flutter of wing. The effect was so *startling* on Wesakaychak that his muscles refused to function adequately and he fell with a splash in the middle of the river.

Scarcely had he touched the water when he was further startled by ducks and geese that had come to see the fun because they still bore him a grudge on account of the catastrophe at the blindfold dance. These splashed water all over him with their wings. When finally they ceased, Wesakaychak crawled out of the river more dead than alive. The "startlers" had repaid him amply for his practical joke.

As he sat beside a fire, drying his clothes, he made up his mind that he would make weapons for himself. They would be for purposes of defence — and of offence when necessary. As this resolve formed in his mind he noticed that flat, board-like strips were falling away from the decayed log on which he was sitting. Each of these represented one year's growth of the tree. They were soft and could easily be worked into shape.

Taking a sharp stone that he always carried around with him, Wesakaychak began to whittle; and soon he was manufacturing all kinds of weapons. He made a dagger; a bow and several arrows; a spear; two large hunting knives and sundry other weapons. Placing these in their proper place on his person, he stuck an eagle quill in his hair. Thus

Wesakaychak presented a very war-like appearance. Walking over to a stream of water he gazed long at his own reflection and felt himself to be a bold warrior indeed.

"From now on," said he; "I disdain to conquer these animals by the cowardly method of outwitting them. I shall fight them on their own ground and subjugate them; otherwise man will be in a sorrowful plight."

#### FIGHT WITH THE GRIZZLY BEAR.

Having given a general challenge to the animal kingdom, Wesakaychak marched off, confident in his ability to conquer anyone who might cross his path. Deer, moose, caribou and other animals fled in panic before him. He was greatly elated, and an air of superiority showed itself on his brow.

It happened one day that he met a great grizzly bear. He ordered it out of his path, telling it that, being a warrior, he must have the right of way in the forest as well as on the prairies. The bear good-naturedly stepped to one side to avoid a collision with the approaching warrior.

Wesakaychak ached for a fight, however, and here was a worthy antagonist. He swerved to one side as he walked and collided violently with the bear. "Where are your eyes, my slow brother?" asked he tauntingly. The bear looked him over haughtily and walked away. This was too much for our hero, who followed the bear and gave it a rousing kick.

Like a flash of lightning the indolent beast turned, showing its great teeth in a snarl. Wesakaychak began to shoot with his bow and arrows. Alas! They were of soft wood and they fell without causing any injury. In a short time they were all used up. The grizzly now made a spring and Wesakaychak met him with a spear which splintered on the bear's face. "If I were one of those poor warriors that own just one single weapon, you would have me at a disadvantage," gasped Wesakaychak, as he jumped aside. Pulling out a knife, he closed in on the bear and stabbed it in the side. His weapon crumbled in his hand. He took his second knife, but this shared the fate of the other. The time had come for a rapid change of tactics. He must flee. Wesakaychak's natural agility when running away was worthy of note; he jumped clear over a willow bush with the bear in hot pursuit.

Around and around this bush fled Wesakaychak with the bear coming steadily after him. In time they made a path around the bush, and Wesakaychak noticed an old bull-buffalo head gradually being unearthed. Every time he passed it, he kicked at it in order to dislodge it. At last he succeeded. On the next round he hurriedly grabbed up the head, and, placing it on his own, turned on the grizzly, bellowing like a bull with such energy that the bear turned tail and ran for his life. It felt sure that Wesakaychak had become a buffalo.

As was said before, our hero was swift when running away, but he was equally so when running after anything fleeing from him. Making a great leap, he landed astride of the bear's back, and that animal, frantic with fright, did its best to be rid of this dangerous rider. Swiftly it ran over stumps and stones, and Wesakaychak, now afraid to jump off, held on like grim death. Suddenly down they went over a precipice. Both of them lay stunned. The bear, being the first to come to, sniffed at Wesakaychak's face, and then walked away in the forest.

Wesakaychak in time regained consciousness. His antagonist had gone. Nursing his head, he smiled as he thought of the brave beginning he had made as a warrior and of his ignoble end.

"In days to come," said he, "when warriors first go forth to battle, they will do so in humility. The ornament on the head will be used, not before a battle but after glory has been achieved by prowess born of a courageous and manly heart."

One more thing he had learned, and from this experience he laid down a rule which obtained throughout the prairie in later times.

#### ADVENTURE WITH THE STONE

Sometime after his adventure with the grizzly Wesakaychak was greatly bored. He looked around for something of interest. A pile of old buffalo horns attracted his attention; here was something with which he could ornament his robe. Sitting down beside the pile, he began to polish them till they shone. There is nothing that responds so well to rubbing as buffalo horns. After he had finished this part of his task, he strung them at regular intervals along the edge of his robe. When the whole was completed, he covered himself up, and the rattle of the horns as he walked made a pleasing noise to him. Be it known that he was ever investigating how effects followed causes, for he had no help from hereditary knowledge.

Coming to a large boulder he stopped abruptly. An idea had come to him. "My poor brother," said he — for to him everyone was a relation, — "your exterior looks rough. You must suffer equally from rain and the excessive heat of summer. Here you are," he continued, covering the stone with his robe. "I will give you this present. My heart goes with it."

He had not gone far when he noticed a very black cloud approaching from the west. At once he repented having given away his robe. The storm came nearer and looked very threatening. What a fool he had been to give his robe to a stone! He doubled on his tracks and, coming to the boulder, pulled the robe off from it most rudely, saying at the same time, "*Ishai* (an exclamation of challenging contempt.) Do you think I would really give you my robe when I need it myself? You have defiled it!"

Now Wesakaychak was given to tempting fate. Retreating a short distance, he began to tease the stone. "Yu-hoh!" he said, pretending to be afraid. "I believe the old stone is beginning to lose its temper! I must watch out! No knowing what it may not do! I am afraid it is thinking of chasing me!" The boulder actually moved a little. "Yu-hoh! Yu-hoh!" Wesakaychak gave two little jumps as if to flee.

All of a sudden the stone moved and slowly began to roll after Wesakaychak, who pranced along in delightful anticipation. Our hero's joy was short-lived, however. Swift of foot though he was, he could hear the stone thundering right behind him. Thinking to get it at a disadvantage he ran up a hill, but the stone maintained the same speed, and he was obliged to run down again. His delight had changed now to terror. He ran like the wind; but the stone continued to gain on him till it struck him on the legs and he tumbled down. His pursuer calmly rolled on to his back and settled down.

"That's right, my brother!" said Wesakaychak, trying to make light of his situation, "My back has been troubling me lately. Rub it a little for me, it will do me good." The stone moved, the better to settle down. "There! That's the very spot. I thank you, my brother!" he said.

In a little while Wesakaychak began to feel his position very trying. "That is enough now. I thank you, brother," said he. "Your rubbing has been very beneficial." The stone refused to move, and Wesakaychak at length realized that he had to look to himself or he would be there all his life. He called upon every bird, beast and reptile he knew, but they all confessed to being afraid of the big stone. He found nothing that was able to release him. Year after year he lay there, and at last moss grew over him and mixed with his hair.

One evening in summer time some night hawks (*peasks*) were flying around. They would go up high and come down with a great whirring noise of their wings. Each time they descended the stone would give a start. Here, at last, was somebody of whom his captor was afraid.

"Come here! Come here! My brothers!" beseeched Wesakaychak. "This stone is killing me, but he is afraid of you. Fly up high and then come down together with all the noise you are able to make. If you free me, I will paint you so that you will be handsome."

The vain birds were more than eager to win beauty for themselves so easily. Up high they flew; then coming down together at a great rate they whirred with their wings close to the stone, and it splintered to pieces. Wesakaychak arose, picking off moss from his hair. He was very grateful to the birds for his deliverance. He took them up one by one, straightened out their beaks which had been ungainly before, and with a piece of white clay made dots all over them. They looked very handsome.

Then standing up to his full height, Wesakaychak said these words,

"In days to be you will be called *peashwa*. You will never need to build a nest in order to hatch your young." This is why night hawks lay their eggs on bare mud and are covered with many white spots.

#### WESAKAYCHAK'S BUFFALO.

One day Wesakaychak saw an old buffalo bull feeding, and being hungry he felt he must find some way of killing it.

"My brother," he said with a disarming smile, "I have been looking for you for days. Up north there was a great and prolonged argument. It was a big talk. Most of the people held stoutly that you were no runner at all; while I myself, knowing you better, maintained that you were fleet of foot and that you could beat me even if you were blindfolded as you ran."

The old bull was pleased. "I admit," said he, "that I am fleet of foot, although modesty does not allow me to make the fact generally known. I am willing now to prove the faith you have in me, and I will race you with my eyes closed."

Wesakaychak had noticed a precipice not far away from where they were. Having blindfolded his "brother," he faced him in the direction of the cliff. Giving the word to start, each of them leaped forward and was off. Our hero took care not to pass the bull and kept talking to let it know that he was behind. In the excitement of the race, the old animal forgot that the precipice was close. A warning cry came from Wesakaychak; but it came a little too late! The bull tumbled down and broke his neck. Wesakaychak, going through the performance of wiping tears off his eyes, said, "My foolish old brother! When will age learn to be sensible?" Then later, "I believe he is in fair condition, and I am *so* hungry."

With a practised hand he soon had the hide removed. Opening the abdomen he pulled out the part of the folds of the stomach called by the Indians *oo-mao*. This was generally eaten raw, being very crisp. "Here," said he to a small fox that was prowling around. "Go and wash this for me in the river." The fox went down with it but instead of washing it, ate the meat and then came back to Wesakaychak with the news that the wolverine had robbed him of it. Wesakaychak gave him another piece and this shared the fate of the first. The fox gave the same story, but Wesakaychak, suspecting, gave him a kick which stunned him.

Having dressed the meat, Wesakaychak made up his mind to have a sleep first before he partook of it. He deputed his own mouth to call him if any animal should come around to steal. It was to yell out when giving the alarm.

No sooner was he asleep than a mouse came and the mouth of course did its duty, waking up Wesakaychak, who saw only the small

creature running away. In a little while the mouth again gave the alarm for practically nothing, and this time it was told to keep quiet for the rest of the night.

The wolverine was the next one that came, and, no alarm being given, he quietly dragged the dead body of the bull to a bush nearby where he was joined by a large number of other hungry beasts. They feasted to their heart's content and nothing but bones were left when they finally dispersed.

Wesakaychak woke up hungry in the morning. Sitting up, he rubbed his eyes, — the meat was gone. Following the marks to the bush, he saw bones scattered everywhere. He could not very well blame anybody but himself, so he picked up the bones and took them to his camp fire.

He carefully broke them up into small pieces and boiled them. A layer of nice grease formed on top of the water. Scooping it up he placed it in a flat container and waited for it to cool off. Grease is capable of absorbing great heat, but it is very slow in giving it up. Wesakaychak at least thought so, being very hungry. He determined to ask the muskrat to tow it about the stream and cool it off. That little animal consented to do this for him. He tied it to the small creature's tail, and the plan worked beautifully till Wesalkaychak's love of mischief overcame his reason. He knew the 'rat to be a very nervous little animal, and the desire to startle it came over him with such force that he gave way. "Sh-h-h!!" he said with startling suddenness, as the 'rat went past him towing his pan of grease most carefully. With wonderful rapidity the little animal dived, and the grease was spilt. Wesakaychak, jumping into the water, took up handfuls of the floating grease and licked it. This was all he tasted of his buffalo. His love of practical jokes often resulted in his own undoing.

#### THE LITTLE BIRD'S ARROW.

Wesakaychak was lying down in the sunshine one day when he heard the sound of chopping, apparently at no great distance from where he was. Who could it be? Surely there were no people in the vicinity.

Getting up, he walked into the woods to investigate. It sounded quite near, and yet he could not see anyone. He proceeded slowly, looking around as we went. There ahead of him was an axe swinging but he could not see anyone at the handle. He went still nearer and all at once his features relaxed into a wide grin. There before him was a little bird, most dignified in its deportment, swinging away manfully at a big birch log.

When Wesakaychak was able to control his merriment, he asked the little fellow what he was doing. "I am engaged in shaping an arrow for my own use," said the bird. "But you are so small and this is a

terrible weapon," said Wesakaychak incredulously. "I can use it, else I would not be making it," said the little bird, "in these unhappy times one must be ready for purposes of defense." "You talk like a little man," said Wesakaychak. "I will tell you what we will do. I will go and stand a few paces off, and you will shoot at my head." "I hate to do childish and useless things," replied the bird, "but, since you doubt my manhood, go and stand in front of yonder hill which looks so blue in the distance and I will shoot at you."

Wesakaychak, always ready for a little fun, walked away towards the blue hill. Arriving there, he took his stand. As if it were close he heard the voice of the bird say, "Watch out!" Seeing a small speck coming in the distance he dodged to one side and almost at the same instant felt the whiz of the arrow past his ear. It buried itself in the heart of the hill.

Slowly recovering from his fright and surprise, he looked in the direction the arrow had come from and there was the bird standing calmly, bow in hand. When he had fully recovered his self-possession Wesakaychak's face relaxed into a smile. Affecting a look of reproach, he said laughingly, "I was only fooling with you, my little brother, when I asked you to shoot at me and you took me seriously!"

Inspired by the noble bearing of the little bird he stood up as straight as an arrow. Holding up his hand he said, "When man inhabits this land, both in the hunt and in war, the use of the arrow will level the strength and the courage of men. Because of it the small will never be entirely at the mercy of the big and the strong."

#### WESAKAYCHAK AND THE HAIRY HEARTS.

Wesakaychak now felt the need of companionship of his own kind. He had seen a camp at a certain place and thither he went. He was received very hospitably, for although known to be full of practical jokes, he was a man of great worth when confronted with matters of importance. The head man invited him to appear before him.

"You have come at a time of sorrow," said this man. "Yesterday one of our young men, who had been out hunting, failed to return. We know only too well what has happened to him. There are hairy beings living some distance from here who have been instrumental in the death of a number of our young man. Whenever they find a man walking through the forest alone they kill him and eat him. They hunt for men and they call us 'moose'. They are encamped beside a lake, in the middle of which, on the ice, is a spear. As soon as a man steps on the lake he is drawn irresistably towards the spear and falls on it, pierced through the body. The father of these beings comes along in the morning and takes the body home to be eaten. These beings are known as Hairy Hearts."

As Wesakaychak listened, he felt that here was something that needed adjustment. He must destroy these beings. That night, having made a few necessary preparations, he secretly left the camp and headed for the haunt of the Hairy Hearts. It was a moonlight night; and the hoarfrost on the trees showed up beautifully. There before him, up in the clear, cold sky was his father, the Great Dipper. He remembered his last words to him, "I hope that of our misfortune may come what will be for the good of man." He walked on determined to put things right, and to give his own kind that chance to prosper which he felt sure they were worthy to have.

As the dawn was coming he came to the lake that had been mentioned. Unhesitatingly he stepped on to it. No sooner had he done so than he felt himself drawn by a powerful force towards the center of the lake. He let himself go till he was within a few feet of the spear. Then he paused with an effort and grasped it in his hand. Putting it through his coat, he passed it between his arm and body. Lying down prostrate on the snow he managed to look as if he too had met the same fate as the others had.

Now be it known that the Hairy Hearts were not an intelligent race. They were able to think, it is true, but there generally was a link or two missing when they attempted to reason a thing out. It was, therefore, not to be wondered at that the old Hairy Heart was deceived into thinking that Wesakaychak was dead and frozen solid. Heaving him on to his shoulder he headed for his wigwam.

While on the open ice it was easy enough to carry his burden for he was strong, but coming to the winding path among the spruce, his troubles began. Wesakaychak was of a roguish disposition, and here was a splendid chance to give vent to his love of mischief. Taking hold of the branch of a tree he held on. The Hairy Heart tottered and then forged ahead, thinking that his burden was somehow caught among the trees. When Wesakaychak saw him pulling ahead, he suddenly let go of the branch, and the sudden relief sent the old one headlong into the snow. Seeing that the trick worked well, Wesakaychak practiced it over and over again, each time making his captor more breathless and angry. At other times he would box him on the ear, and the old one would moan with pain, thinking that a branch had swished and struck him. The journey was so full of trouble to the Hairy Heart that he decided to leave his "moose" behind and send somebody over to fetch it.

It was his old woman he picked on to finish the work he had left uncompleted. Muttering words she did not dare to say openly, she went out; and coming to where she expected to see the "moose" she found nothing but a bundle of spruce branches. Feeling disgusted at her husband's stupidity, she went back and told him what she had found. "You foolish woman," said the Hairy Heart, "that bundle

is himself. That ‘moose’ has strong spirit help. Go and get him.” She brought the bundle back with her this time.

Cutting the branches up carefully she boiled them in her big pot. Every now and again one of the family would taste the “soup” but there was no change. It eventually dawned on the dull brain of the old one that Wesakaychak had played a trick on him, and he was very angry.

Taking a spear he went to see for himself. Sure enough, there were the tracks leading off from where he had left his “moose.” He followed the tracks till at dusk they ended at a large pine tree with spreading branches. It was quite dark; so he decided he would wait till the morning. Covering himself up in his robe he lay down beneath the tree.

As it turned out, Wesakaychak was sitting up among the branches right over where the old one was lying down. He spent the long hours of the night pelting the face of the would-be sleeper with cones, pieces of sticks and snow. Being given to roguish tricks, he managed to spend a very enjoyable time of it, laughing silently to himself whenever he managed to make a good hit.

In the morning, after a very troubled sleep, the old one opened his eyes and there right above him among the branches was his “moose.” “Ah! there you are, my good moose,” said he. “Yes,” replied Wesakaychak. “I have been waiting for you all night so that you will not have to go any farther.” “What a good moose is mine,” said the Hairy Heart. “You will not have to wait much longer; for I am hungry. I will come up right away and dispatch you.”

Suiting the action to his words he began to climb the tree, spear in hand. Every time he looked up, Wesakaychak shook the branches and a shower of dust and pieces of sticks would fall on his face and eyes. Furthermore, his long spear was causing him much difficulty.

“Hand your spear up to me, and then you can use both hands in grasping at the branches,” suggested Wesakaychak. “What a clever moose,” said the Hairy Heart in admiration of the other’s intelligence. “I should never have thought of that myself.”

So saying, he handed up his spear, and Wesakaychak solicitously asked him not to look up in case something should fall into his eyes. This last piece of advice the old one appreciated also, and came crawling up with his head down. When he was near enough, Wesakaychak drove the spear into the crown of his head. The creature was indeed stunned and fell to the ground, but the Hairy Hearts were very tenacious of life. In a little while he staggered up to his feet and began carefully walking home, groaning every time a branch touched the spear which was still in his head.

After a painful effort he reached home. Consternation reigned in the camp. No one seemed to know what should be done under such grave circumstances.

At length one of them suggested a plan. "Let the Wise One be called!" said he. The one referred to was supposed to be of a very superior intelligence. All concurred with this suggestion.

The Wise One responded to the call readily. Putting his head into the wigwam in which the wounded one lay, he took in the situation at a glance. "Sap.....!" said he; and with that went back to his own lodge. No one understood him but this indefiniteness of speech served to heighten the respect that was held for him. They sent again for him. This time he was more explicit: "*Sapokechich!* (hammer it through)," said he.

Being wise, nobody thought of questioning the advice he gave. They hammered the spear through, and the old Hairy Heart died. His own kin ate him up, his widow claiming the greater portion of his carcass.

In the meantime, Wesakaychak had been busy. He knew they would not give him up and he surely was not going back himself till he had rid the earth of them. He made a slide down a steep hill, throwing water over it till it was very smooth. At the bottom of this he placed a big club.

All preparations being made, he went to the Hairy Heart camp. It was night time and the wigwams were all alight with the fires in them. He could hear talking and laughter. They were not mourning for the death of the father of the camp. Wesakaychak, tightening his belt and seeing that his shoe strings were securely tied, yelled out, "Hai! What are you Hairy Hearts doing? Your 'moose' is still at large." A great hubbub arose! The Hairy Hearts, male and female, big and little, rushed out and gave chase to Wesakaychak, who, always fleet of foot, bounded over the deep snow, heading straight for the top of the hill on which he had made his slide. Coming to it, he slid down to the bottom. Here he took up his position waiting, club in hand.

The Hairy Hearts came on, strung out in a line. The swiftest of them was the first one to come sliding down the hill helplessly. Wesakaychak struck him on the head and threw him aside. One after the other, the rest came down and all were met in the same way. Last of all the old widow came down the slide with screams and a great deal of clatter caused by her pots which she had slung on to her back. She, too, met the same fate accorded to the others.

Wesakaychak now ripped the bodies open and pulled out the hearts. They were hairy and still beating. Making a huge fire he burnt them, nor did he leave till they were burnt up completely.

Taking up the ashes he threw them up. The wind wafted them away; and, standing up tall and noble in bearing, he made his usual pronouncement, "In days to come such beings as these will not exist on earth. They would be a hindrance to man. Out of the ashes of the hearts which are scattered will come small white animals which will be food for man when other and larger game is scarce."

From here and there, wherever the ashes he had thrown up fell, hopped away those mild and timid animals which have been so useful to man in the past — the rabbits.

## WESAKAYCHAK MAKES A POUND.

On a deserted camp ground a solitary wigwam could have been seen one day in late winter. A little smoke came out of the hole at the top.

Some distance away a beautiful Indian girl moved about wearily, gathering dry sticks which she was to tie up into a bundle and carry with her to the wigwam where her aged father and mother were. Her movements were slow, for she was without food. She knew that it was only a matter of time before one or another of the three members of the little family would succumb to hunger and die.

As she was tying up the wood, she sensed the presence of somebody. Looking up, she saw a handsome man standing some distance away from her. Her first impulse was to flee but something in the noble bearing of the stranger reassured her. Unable to meet his gaze, she hung her head and waited for him to speak.

His first words surprised her. "I know you are hungry and that you have been deserted by your kind," he said. "I am one who am alone in the world but would help you, if you would let me."

The girl felt strangely drawn to the man, but she replied calmly enough, "You speak kindly and although you are a stranger and it might be considered immodest of me to speak freely to you on matters that are personal to myself, I will tell you why you see us thus. There was a great camp here once. Many young men whom I admired and who were worthy and brave sought to have me for wife, and because I was unable to say 'yes' to any of them, I offended many families. In time a coldness sprang up between us and the rest of the camp. When they moved away we decided to remain, and we are now slowly dying of hunger."

Wesakaychak — for it was he — was much moved by her story. "Tell your father," said he, "that I would willingly stay here in order to help you."

The girl went back, the joy in her eyes clouded by the great fear that lurked in their depths. She told the news to her father who, needless to say, was greatly pleased to welcome the stranger.

After Wesakaychak had sat talking to the old man for some time, he went out. It was not long before he returned, however, with the choicest parts of buffalo meat. The delight of the family was evident. They ate and drank, sparingly at first but more as time went on. This was the beginning of happier times.

Day after day, Wesakaychak went out, and he never returned without game. With plenty to eat and much to spare, they quickly regained the strength they had lost.

One evening Wesakaychak asked the old man if he would help in making a "pound," or fence of large timbers, strong and high. The old man gladly consented, even though he did not know what use the structure was to be put to.

They built it of large poplars on a bluff close by. They made it in the form of a circle, each log being dovetailed into the two adjoining ones, and the whole when completed was braced strongly from the outside. There was only one gate. The approach to this was a sort of platform which slanted up from the ground for quite a distance to the opening, at which there was a drop of about four or five feet into the "pound." At regular intervals on either side of the approach they placed tufts of willows, forming two lines which converged at the gate.

When all was ready, Wesakaychak told his friends that he was going to run out for buffalo, and that when they heard the animals coming they were not to look out, else everything would be spoiled.

He started off. Coming into view of a herd grazing out on the plains below the hill on which he was, he covered himself over with his robe and gave out a queer high-pitched series of yells. Curiosity is a strong trait among all creatures, and the buffalo came running up the hill. Wesakaychak ran speedily to another elevation and was on the crest of it by the time the herd reached the hill from which he had first called them. Repeating this performance once more the buffalo came on. By using this strategy, which was later to be used so generally, Wesakaychak managed to lead them into the approach lined with willow tufts that led into the the pound.<sup>1</sup>

No sooner, however, did the three at the camp hear the sounds of hoofs and of horns knocking against horns, than they became greatly excited. The two women could not control their curiosity. They peeped out, but saw nothing. All the noise suddenly stopped, and in a few moments Wesakaychak came in quietly.

Next morning he again expressed his intention to run for buffalo. He said he was sorry to have to say so, but this time he insisted on the two women being tied up securely. He himself secured the young woman carefully, while the old man did the same with his wife, much to the indignation of the latter. The two women lay prostrate, tied hand and foot with soft leather thongs.

When again they heard the approach of the buffalo herd and the noise of "people" yelling excitedly, the women's excitement knew no bounds. What did the sound of human voices mean? They rolled and

<sup>1</sup> In later times men hid behind these willows, and as soon as the leader of the animals had passed, waved their cloaks, thus keeping the herd going in the proper direction. It needed skillful manoeuvering, but it was by far the most effective way of killing the animal so necessary to life in those days.

wriggled, but could not loosen themselves. The noise increased, and they heard the hoofs as the herd passed over the platform; they heard the bellowing of the bulls and the excited voices of men, women and children; then twangs of bow strings and whoops of delight. It was cruel to be forced to lie prone like logs when all this was going on.

At length the noise ceased, and a few moments later Wesakaychak came in quietly and began to untie the girl. She was indignant at him, but he did not seem to notice. The older woman was more expressive; she told her husband exactly what he looked like and what she thought of him. Altogether she failed to acquit herself in the manner that women affected towards their husbands in the old days.

The three now went out, and the sight which met their eyes! The pound was full of dead buffalo. Day after day they worked, dressing and hauling the meat. They made platforms up in the trees, and upon these they placed the carcasses.

When all the meat was securely put away and the women were busy tanning the hides into leather, Wesakaychak told the old man that the band of Indians which had gone away from the camp earlier in the winter were starving, and that he would like to go and invite them to move camp to where they were. The old man was glad that it should be so.

Wesakaychak made preparations, and the young woman looked at him with great concern. She had not heard of his intention to go and invite the starving Indians; she only knew he was going away. This is not a love story, but be it said that by now she had grown very much attached to this man who had done so much for her and for her family and who never took advantage of his kindness to them in any way. She went out to pick up sticks where she had first met him.

In a little while, he came out fully equipped for his journey. "You are going to leave us?" she said, and her eyes filled with tears before she had time to check them. He looked at her for some time without speaking. Then he said, "I never thought that I should love a woman again. I had one, and she is dead. Yet, when I first saw you here and pitied you, I loved you. I shall be back in a little while and then I shall speak to your father." At this she dried her tears, and her eyes sparkled through them. She was betrothed to the man she loved. Nothing else mattered; even the one dread of her life was temporarily dead.

In a few days he returned and with him was the starving band of Indians. The old man acted as the herald. He welcomed the people and told them to camp in a circle and to help themselves to as much of the meat as they needed.

As if by magic the great camp was reared. Everyone was happy. A council meeting was held, and Wesakaychak was asked to act as chief of the tribe. He declined.

That night he asked the old man for his daughter, and, consent being

gladly given, he took her to wife. A new wigwam was made for him; and it was pitched outside of the circle among the wigwams of the leading men.

#### WESAKAYCHAK AND THE THUNDERBIRD.

Wesakaychak was happy with his beautiful wife, but life is not all happiness. It was now springtime and Wesakaychak noticed that something was troubling his wife. She still loved him, he knew, but she seemed nervous and her appetite had failed her. He was very anxious, and at last made up his mind to ask her if there was anything on her mind. This he did one day. She replied to his question, "I am afraid, not so much for myself but because I love you so well and your life is in great danger. Very soon, now one who has loved me since I was a little girl will be here. He is terrible and will kill you."

Wesakaychak felt elation rather than dismay at this reply. He knew now that his wife's love for him was real, and he was ready to meet any danger that might come his way.

"What happens when he approaches?" he asked her.

"A black cloud comes from the west. There is a great wind, and lightning pierces through the cloud in all directions. Then a low, rumbling noise —." At this moment she paused; for they both heard the noise, distant and ominous. Her face was as pale as death and her hand shook. "It is he!" she gasped faintly.

Wesakaychak smiled at her reassuringly. "Do not be afraid. Trust your husband," said he. "Control yourself now, and tell your father to advise the people to secure their wigwams carefully. Then come back and sit down here near me." His confident air calmed her somewhat, and she went out and did what he asked her to do.

With startling suddenness the storm struck the camp. Peyasiw, the Thunder Bird, arrived. He threw the door flap of Wesakaychak's tent open rudely as he strode in. "Go out!" he yelled to Wesakaychak in thunderous tones, while his eyes flashed forked lightning. Wesakaychak sat quietly without reply. "It is *you* I am speaking to," roared Peyasiw again. This time Wesakaychak replied, "You go out and I will follow you." This Peyasiw did.

Taking a beautiful buffalo robe that hung on a line, Wesakaychak slung it over his shoulder and walked out. When he came face to face with his rival he shook his robe and the atmosphere cooled down. He shook it again, and the air was frosty. He repeated the action yet again, and the trees began to crackle with the frost.

Peyasiw, the Thunder Bird, began to shiver with the cold. His one weakness was his inability to live except in warm atmosphere. "You have beaten me," said he. "I love her, but she is yours. Whatever power I may have is yours, only save my life."

"You should have said that before," said Wesakaychak, shaking his

robe again and thus bringing back the warmth that had prevailed during the day. "Go! Remember, I have defeated you. Only once in a while in days to come, you will destroy man by accident; but you will never terrorize him nor try to assume relationships with him other than those involved in your work. By the power of the Crow I defeated you. Do not forget that."

In subsequent years the Blackfeet threw crow weed on the fire whenever there was much lightning and thunder, and all through the camp could be heard people crying, "Caw! Caw! Caw!" in order to ward off the danger of being struck by lightning.

The joy of Wesakaychak's wife knew no bounds. They lived happily together for a long time.

#### WESAKAYCHAK AND THE TOMTITS.

Walking along one summer day in a most aimless way, Wesakaychak was bored to death with himself and his surroundings, when suddenly a strange sight caught his eye. There in front of him was a tomtit engaged in some sort of ceremonial: it would take its eyes out, throw them up on to the tops of the willows, and then they would drop back into their sockets.

Wesakaychak felt an irresistible desire to be able to do the same. He approaches the bird. "My little brother," said he. "Teach me how to do that too." "No!" replied the bird in a severe voice. "This is a sacred rite; I only do this when I have a headache." Wesakaychak felt himself rebuked and walked on without replying.

He was not as much impressed by the sacredness of the rite as he seemed to be, however. He had no sooner gone out of sight than he made a quick detour, describing a half circle and arriving where he had been when he first saw the bird. Here he made a few changes in his appearance. Repainting his face with vermillion, he took a stick in his hand and stooped as if he were an old decrepit man. With many a groan he passed close by where the bird was still performing the rite. "What is the matter, old man?" asked the tomtit, pausing and looking at Wesakaychak.

"Oh, I am in a miserable state," replied that personage. "Do not bother your head about my wretchedness. I would not bring sorrow into your happy, happy life. I am all broken up and to cap it all, my head aches so much it almost splits. Oh-h-h!" he moaned as he pretended to move on.

"Wait!" said the bird. "I will see what I can do for you. Take out your eyes and throw them up to the top of these willows. Do not be afraid; they will drop back into place again. Remember, do not abuse this gift. Never use it unless you are in absolute need of it."

Wesakaychak, groaning pitifully, took his eyes out and threw them up. They dropped back into place. He was pleased, for he had never

thought such a thing possible. He walked away swiftly after he had assured the tomtit that the performance had cured him entirely of his headache.

The very first time he saw a bunch of willows, he began to groan, holding his head in both hands. "My head! My head is splitting!" he cried in gasps. As soon as he reached the willows, he threw up his eyes and felt them drop in again. Several times he repeated the act before his groaning ceased, and he was content to proceed on his way.

After this, every time he saw a bunch of willows he began to groan, holding his head. It was a most pleasant way to pass the time.

He was, however, making light of a rite somebody held sacred, and that is a dangerous thing to do. A curse dogs the steps of those who do so. He was throwing his eyes up when a fox saw him. This animal was at first very surprised but later began to plan how best to play a trick on Wesakaychak. The latter had by this time come to look upon himself as being so proficient in eye throwing that he tossed them up a great deal too high. Instead of their dropping into the sockets, he heard them fall on to the ground. He was now in a desperate predicament. He got down on his knees and felt all over the ground, but the fox had slyly run away with the eyes.

Every now and again, a sharp stick would prick Wesakaychak in the socket of his eye, and the pain at such times would be terrible. The fox, who was watching, was greatly delighted to see Wesakaychak in such a predicament. He had played so many tricks on the animals that none had much pity on him now. At length he heard a smothered laugh near him, and he knew it was the fox. "Oh, help me, my little brother," cried he. "Bring my eyes to me and I will repay you." The cruel animal, however, ran away with a laugh of derision that resounded through the woods.

It was now clear to Wesakaychak that he must do something for himself. He walked along slowly, every now and again coming up against some tree. "What kind of tree are you?" he would ask. None of the replies satisfied him, till at last he struck an apparently large one. "What tree are you?" he asked as usual. "Spruce," replied the tree. "The right one!" cried Wesakaychak. He passed his hand over the bark and collected pieces of dry gum. When he felt he had enough, he chewed it till it was soft and pliable. He then shaped this to resemble an eye, and, inserting it into one of the sockets, he could see! To collect more gum and make another eye for himself was only a small matter. He was again his old self and confidently he went forth to avenge himself on the fox.

He found that animal sleeping among some tall grass. How best to kill him was the question. To shoot at him with a dull-headed arrow would leave a dark patch on the hide; to use a sharp arrow would pierce it. The best way was to set fire to the dry grass all around him, for the slow approach of the fire would create anguish in the mind of the fox.

even before he actually burned. That would be a suitable punishment for what he had done.

Suiting the action to his resolve, Wesakaychak started a ring of fire around the fox. When it was done, he gave a triumphant yell. The fox jumped up. Hither and thither he ran as if in great distress. Nearer and nearer came the fire from all directions. Wesakaychak clapped his hands in delight! When the fire came very near him the fox jumped over it easily and ran away laughing. Only the tip of his tail was singed. That is why it is white in color at that part in these days. Wesakaychak was very angry at himself, and spent some time in telling himself that he was a very poor specimen of man.

#### THE HANDICAP RACE.

Having nothing of any consequence to do, and being always curious about things, Wesakaychak made up his mind to go straight east. He determined to swerve neither to the right nor to the left.

Having made this resolution, he started. A tree would stand in his way sometimes; he would climb up to the top and down the other side. Rivers and lakes tried to bar his way, but he swam across them. A bear, realizing what he was doing, thought to have fun with him. He came running with a growl as if to attack Wesakaychak, and that person's hair stood on end, but he kept to his road, only at a faster pace. Every now and again the bear appeared from the side, growling fiercely; every time Wesakaychak's hair would rise. He had such difficulty in keeping to his road that he was glad when he saw the ocean in front of him. "I will practice first," said he to himself. He jumped into the water and swam half way across. He returned to the shore again, and this time he swam out in earnest for the opposite shore, feeling confident that he could do it easily.

The trial trip, however, had tired him, and it was not long before he realized that he was giving out. He determined to swim back, but when he was not far from shore he became unconscious with exhaustion and was drowned.

The waves of the ocean lashed the rocks and after a time he was washed ashore. He lay prone for some time where he had been cast. He was of a restless temperament, however, and this saved his life. "What am I doing here, lying down like an old wet log, when I could be walking around and looking for something to eat," said he to himself. With that he arose and walked into the forest, determined to find the bear who had teased him while traveling to the east.

He came upon the bear among some high bush cranberries. The animal was busily engaged eating them, and Wesakaychak pretended not to see him. He would himself take a ripe cranberry, burst it near his eye and then laugh merrily. The bear looked at him with curiosity. He kept

up the performance till the animal felt he must know what he was doing and came up to inquire. "I have found a deed of ecstacy," replied Wesakaychak. "You see me burst a berry; the juice goes into my eye, and the effect is so wonderfully pleasing that I cannot help myself and I laugh. Here, take two handfuls, burst them into your eyes and the ecstacy will be multiplied in your case."

The bear, believing Wesakaychak, picked two great handfuls of overripe berries. Keeping his eyes open, he crushed the berries into them, and the next moment the forest was resounding with his cries of pain. The juice had burned his eyes terribly, and he was blinded. "My poor brother! Poor brother!" cried Wesakaychak in pretended anguish. "You made a little error. You did not do it as I told you. Put your head on this log and I will cure you." The bear laid his head down on the log, and Wesakaychak, taking a club, hit him such a blow that he died.

Having cooked the bear he sat down to rest for a short time before beginning his meal. During this interval he saw his old friend, the fox, limping along. "Come here, my little brother," said he. "I will make a bet with you. We will run a race around that big lake and whoever wins can have this bear."

"I cannot race with you," replied the fox. "My foot is very sore, and I find it very difficult even to walk."

"I will handicap myself," said Wesakaychak. "I will tie these big stones on to my ankles."

"All right," said the fox, "but you will leave me, even thus handicapped." They started and Wesakaychak at once went ahead, the stones thudding heavily on the ground as he ran. The fox limped behind slowly.

Wesakaychak raced to such good purpose that soon he was out of sight. The fox, who had been pretending all along, raced back to where the bear lay, and with the help of other animals ate it up in a very short time.

Towards evening Wesakaychak approached, the stones still thudding on the ground. "My poor little brother," said he. "I have left him far behind. I will leave some meat for him; it will brighten up his life for a day at least."

Coming to where his bear had been, there was nothing but scattered bones. "Once more he has outwitted me," said he. "In days to come, the fox will live by his wits. Whenever his cunning fails him man shall kill him." So it is to this day; the fox is one of the most cunning and slyest of animals.

#### WESAKAYCHAK AND THE GEESE.

Wesakaychak sat on a hill watching a flock of geese sporting on a lake below. Now and again some would fly up and then return. There was great ease and speed in their movements. Why should they alone

enjoy the power of flight? Surely, man was worthy of such a gift. He must find out something about it.

Walking down the hill to the lake he called the geese to him. At first they would not come, for they did not trust him because he had so often deceived them. The head gander, however, came over at last and the rest followed at a distance.

"My little brothers!" said Wesakaychak. "I have a matter I want to lay before you. I may say that it is one in which your happiness is involved. I have long been busy in adjusting things on earth. I have destroyed animals that were harmful to the rest of the creatures. I have been a busy man, and for that reason, I have not been able to put things right for those who fly through the spaces above. I am now free to attend to this part of my life-work. You will give me a pair of wings and I shall fly around and see what there is to be done."

The geese hesitated, and talked among themselves for a while. Then the gander replied thus, "We hesitate, not because we are selfish and would not give to others what we enjoy ourselves, but because flying is a dangerous mode of traveling, even to those of us to whom it is natural. We have, however, decided to let you have a pair of wings. Be very careful."

Wesakaychak was delighted. He promised that he would consider the gift as sacred, that he would use it only for the good of those to whom it had originally been given. When thus the matter was satisfactorily settled, Wesakaychak was given an extra large pair of wings. He was cautioned, however, that he must wait a few days before attempting to use them, as they needed time to grow on to his body.

His impatience was so great that he did not wait the full time, but surprised his new friends by crying, "Honk! Honk!" and flying up suddenly. He managed to get to some height when one of the wings broke, and down he splashed on to the lake. The geese spoke to him with great severity and this time he waited the full time required.

When the geese decided to move to other feeding places they formed in two lines, making an angle in the usual way, and Wesakaychak, crying, "Honk! Honk!" lustily, placed himself at their head. They had warned him to keep away from the camps of people, but Wesakaychak, thinking to play a joke on them, flew right straight for a camp, crying, "Honk! Honk!" as he approached it. Men ran out of the wigwams with their weapons and the next moment the geese were flying amongst a shower of arrows. Wesakaychak laughed merrily as a murmur of alarm went through the flock. His merriment was short-lived, however, for an arrow struck one of his wings and down he went, rolling through the air. A great shout arose in the camp and people ran to see the monster goose, as they thought. Their eagerness was changed to laughter when they saw Wesakaychak getting up on to his feet, looking sheepish.

That worthy individual, without so much as saying a word, walked

away into the forest. Pausing for a while he said, "Every creature according to his gifts; with these only must he work out his destiny."

#### WESAKAYCHAK AND THE CANNIBAL.

Going along one day, Wesakaychak had the terrible misfortune to meet a cannibal. Now be it known that such beings were met with in this land in the far distant past. What they were, is not known. They were strong, and they had supernatural power. Their yell was so loud that it paralyzed all who heard them.

Such a personage Wesakaychak met, and he was frozen with terror. His teeth began to chatter, and his knees knocked against each other. His plight was pitiful, but yet he felt he must use his wits. Pulling himself together, he said, "My dear little brother, I have long been looking for you; our mother —," "Hurry up! Make a fire! I have no brothers and I am hungry. I am glad I met you."

Wesakaychak felt it was hopeless. He proceeded to gather up sticks for the fire, moving as slowly as he dared. Every now and again Wetiko, the cannibal, would yell at him to hurry up. There was nothing to do but to make the best of it and meet his horrible fate like a man. He knew that Wetiko was stronger and swifter than he was and there was not much time.

As he was gathering up sticks and the cannibal was blowing on the fire, he saw an ermine running past. "Come here, come here!" he cried in anguished whispers. "I will make of you the most beautiful of all creatures. This Wetiko is going to kill me. When he opens his mouth, jump in and run down his throat. You will find a big round thing beating there; that is his heart. Bite and tear it up. Hurry, hurry, or it will be too late." Wesakaychak pleaded so earnestly that the ermine took pity on him and jumped into the mouth of the Wetiko. "Hurry up, Wesakaychak, I am so hungry my heart is paining me!" yelled the monster. Without so much as waiting to hear the last of this, Wesakaychak fled at a great speed. The Wetiko flew through the air after him, falling dead just as he caught up, tripping Wesakaychak, who cried in anguish, "Father! Father!"

It was some time before the poor man realized that he was still alive, and when he saw that his enemy was dead, he fairly jumped around with joy. "If it had not been for my presence of mind, I would not have been breathing now," he said to himself.

The ermine came crawling out of the mouth of the monster. Wesakaychak took the little animal tenderly and washed all the blood off its fur. Taking some very white clay, he painted him all over with it. Only around the eyes he touched him up with black; this he also did with the tip of the tail. The ermine, proud of its new coat, ran off looking at himself. Ever since then, when winter comes on, this little animal puts

away its original color and dons that which Wesakaychak gave it as a reward of service.

## WESAKAYCHAK'S EXIT.

Wesakaychak now began to feel old age coming on him. His had been a chequered career. He had his noble moments; he had always tried to rise to his responsibilities. Now his work was done.

He packed up his few belongings and determined to go east. There is a place in Alberta known among Indians as the "Resting Place"; that was where he had his first night's sleep on his final journey. About twenty miles west of the town of Battleford he slid down a hill as he went. The impression of his body is still to be seen and the Indians call it, "Wesakaychak's Sliding Place". How far east he traveled is not known but there are those who claim that he has been seen living on an island in the ocean and that he collects toll from passing ships. Others say that he has been so old for such a long time that he has sat in one place for ages and that a small spruce tree has grown through his body.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> By an easy transition the name Wesakaychak has been given to Santa Claus. These legends must not be narrated during summertime; if this is done, snakes are liable to crawl in to listen, it is said. To mark the end of a legend, the narrator usually says, "There goes the crop of a partridge!"